

Keeping polluted storm water out of the ocean

As rain storms move through the area, beach city crews are working to ensure that flood control channels, catch basins and gutters are clear of debris to allow the storm water to wash into the storm drain system without flooding city streets or causing storm water pollution.

Pollution is caused by cigarette butts, gum wrappers, pesticides, pet waste, coffee cups, antifreeze, plastic bags and other debris making its way into the storm drain system. The debris comes from people missing a trash can, tossing a cigarette out a car window, leaving sprinklers on, forgetting to clean up after their pets or who have vehicles with leaking engines. All of these sources can block catch basins and clog the system, causing flooding and pollution.

This pollution gets to the ocean via the cities' storm drain systems. The system is a network of underground pipes and above-ground creeks and rivers that discharge directly to the ocean. The system is designed to prevent flooding during rain storms by taking runoff directly to the ocean. Pollutants and debris deposited onto streets build up, creating a toxic soup that flows directly to the ocean when it rains.

The following are a few guidelines that will assist residents in their efforts to stop storm water pollution.

- Proper use, storage and disposal of all household hazardous products. These products may include cleaners, solvents, paints, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Dispose of all household hazardous waste, including empty containers, at monthly household hazardous waste roundups conducted by Los Angeles County.
- Make it a practice to purchase non-toxic products for home and garden use.
- Use pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers sparingly. Do not apply any chemicals to the lawn or garden before a rain storm or watering.
- Conserve water and do not overwater lawns.
- Use yard trimmings and leaves as compost. Compost supplies gardens with valuable nutrients.
- Dispose of all pet waste in trash cans.
- When changing car fluids, use a drip pan to catch spills. If a spill does occur, apply absorbent materials, such as kitty litter, and dispose of properly.
- All used motor oil can be recycled.